EUGENE WEEKLY'S 2013



HOLIDAY EVENT POPULAR VEGAS PET PERFORMERS CALENDAR COME TO THE HULT CENTER

THE EVER-EVOLVING NUTCRACKER

CUCKOO FOR COCOA JOLLY JOGGING JUMPERS!

TWINKLE, TWINKLE, LITTLE LOWELL

The Ever-Evolving Titcracker Orchestra NEXT joins Eugene Ballet Company for a holiday tradition BY LAUREN MESSMAN

ike fragrant pines, candy canes and twinkle lights, The Nutcracker is a perennial symbol of the holiday season. Toni Pimble, artistic director for the Eugene Ballet Company, agrees. Most people tell her that without the ballet company's annual performance, Christmas just wouldn't be complete. This December, audiences in Eugene, Corvallis, Salem and across the Northwest are invited to join the dancers of EBC as they journey to the Land of Sweets with Clara (the young, nightgown-clad heroine), the Sugar Plum Fairy and, of course, the Nutcracker Prince for the 32nd consecutive year.

But after three decades of the same story - a mischievous Christmas Eve tale filled with magic, a mouse king and a snow queen — Pimble admits, "Sometimes you just want to pull your hair out!" To keep things fresh, Pimble and the EBC have taken some creative liberties over the years because, like Christmas gifts, you wouldn't want to receive the same present year after year.

For example, Pimble, an award-winning choreographer, explains that this is actually the third version of The Nutcracker that the company has performed. She was able to expand her artistic options by swapping a child dancer for a company dancer in the role of Clara. "That obviously gave me much more opportunity choreographically with a professional dancer to create a totally different story line and so then the idea of creating a little love story for Clara



seemed like a great idea," she says. In the story, Clara, a young girl, falls asleep after checking on a toy nutcracker, a gift from the toymaker Drosselmeyer. The nutcracker jolts to life in Clara's dreams as a prince, and in this version, as Drosselmeyer's nephew, Hanes. This year, principal dancer Yoshie Oshima will switch off with Beth Maslinoff, a new addition to the company, in the role of

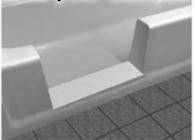
Another exciting change is the recent addition of Orchestra NEXT, a training orchestra led by trumpet virtuoso Brian McWhorter. NEXT, which places leading professionals alongside aspiring musicians, will be performing the iconic Tchaikovsky score. "To have young people in the show on stage and then to have young people in the pit," Pimble says, "it just gives a wonderful feel, a community feel, to the performance."

After 32 years, and touring up to 15 different cities, the classic ballet still leaves a lasting impression on audiences. Pimble recalls a touching time when a single mother and her daughter approached her backstage. "She said, 'You know her grandmother sends her money every Christmas and usually we'll buy shoes, we'll buy this or we'll buy that, but this year we said no. We're going to spend that money on tickets to The Nutcracker." ■

Eugene Ballet Company presents The Nutcracker Friday, Dec. 21, through Sunday, Dec. 23, at the Hult's Silva Concert Hall; \$22-\$48, student and youth

EBC DANCERS BETH MUSLINOFF AND REED SOUTHER



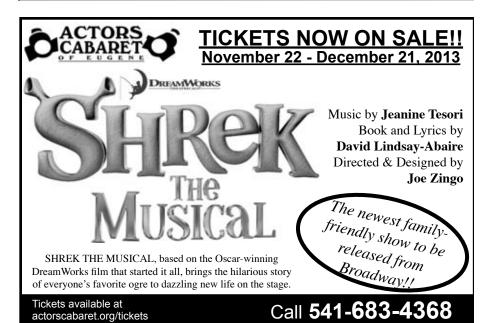




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few years ago some friends and I were driving around on a cold wintry day and stopped by a popular place for hot cocoa, just for fun. The waiter, with great aplomb, opened a pack of Swiss Miss into a paper cup! We were astonished, and not just because of the flair with which he tore the paper packet, but because mu friend spoke at length on the drive about how great the cocoa at this particular place was. How could she have been so wrong?

There are a few silver linings to winter around here: a bone-warming fire, bowls of soup topped with melted cheese and mugs of rich hot chocolate. A great cup of hot chocolate is the best kind of winter pick-me-up. At its worst, a cup of hot chocolate is still a pretty great thing when you're cold and worn out. To find the best, I investigated several Eugene cafés and evaluated their hot cocoa.

One challenge was establishing criteria for my hot chocolate pursuit. First of all, there is a difference between hot cocoa (traditionally powdered) and hot chocolate (traditionally melted bar chocolate), although not all establishments adhered to this nomenclature. Some are made with syrup (Metropol uses Torani brand syrup, Vero uses My Chai syrup), some with powder (Perugino uses Euphoria cocoa powder, Prince Pückler's uses Stephen's). Some are powder mixed with water (Espresso Roma) and some with milk (Vero and Metropol), and some places give you a choice (Prince Pückler's). Some are made only of steamed chocolate milk, such as Dutch Bros., which uses a blend of Umpqua chocolate milk made especially for them. Some are made with decaf

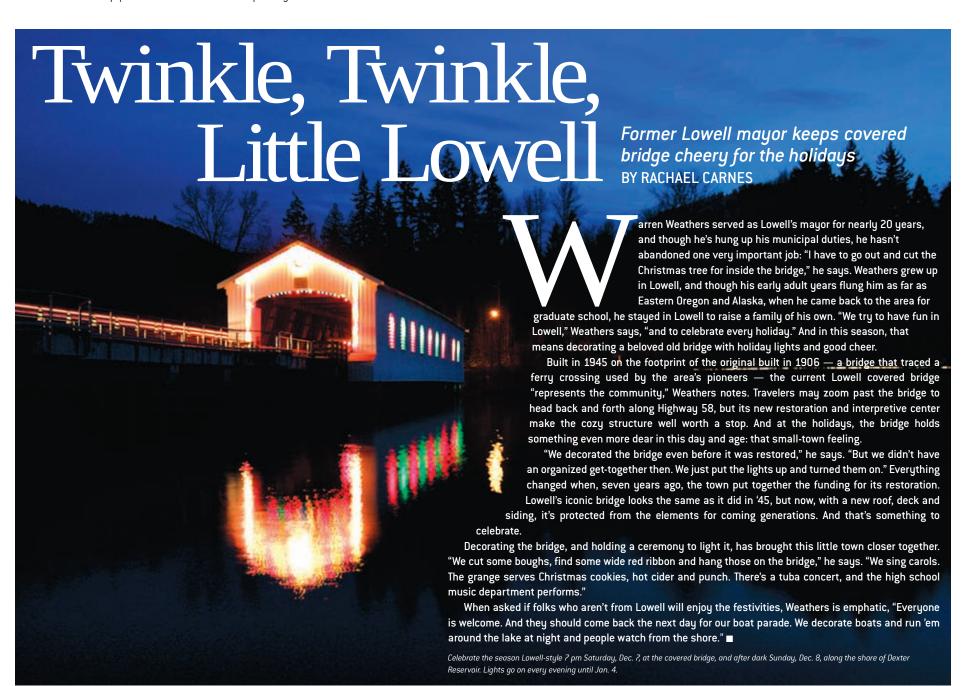
espresso (Wandering Goat).

To-go cups lack the presentation of the café cup and saucer. (But, really, when you need hot cocoa, how much does presentation matter? My final evaluation was ... not so much.). Some establishments offered regular hot chocolate, Mexican hot chocolate (with sugar and cinnamon) and even white hot chocolate, so your chocolate mood can also be a factor. Then there are the practical considerations such as size and price. I got smalls at each place, which varied from 8 ounces to 12 ounces, for anywhere from \$1.95 to \$2.75.

Sweet Life, Marché Museum Café and Full City make their own ganache, which is similar to fudge, and add that to steamed milk to make hot chocolate. Sweet Life uses Guittard chocolate powder with cinnamon for its Mexican hot chocolate, and uses a liquid for its white hot chocolate.

All tasted good, but the ganache version was the richest, and certainly the most "chocolatey." These had a good balance of creaminess and bitterness without that slightly scorched taste that I found in some of the steamed milk versions. Marché wins for the lagniappe; whereas all establishments offered whipped cream on top, only Marché provided house-made marshmallows.

While I found a great variety of hot chocolate in Eugene, I did not find a way to determine an absolute best. Turns out, there are as many ways to make hot cocoa as there are styles of Birkenstocks, and all of them are good in a pinch. Luckily, that Swiss Miss affair was just a spot of bad luck. ■



Comedy Goes to the Dogs

Popular Vegas pet performers come to the Hult Center
BY WILLIAM KENNEDY

s any owner of a house cat knows, it's difficult to get cats to do anything — much less perform for an audience. But award-winning performer Gregory Popovich of The Popovich Comedy Pet Theater thinks he knows the secret: "You cannot push a cat to do something," says Popovich, whose act has been voted Las Vegas' Best New Family Show. "As a trainer I have to see what [the cats] like to do and then create tricks" based on the natural habits of the animal.

Popovich is a native of Russia and comes from a long line of circus artists. "I represent fourth generation circus performer," Popovich says with a thick Russian accent. His mom and dad performed with dogs, so while Popovich initially came to Vegas as a juggler, he drew on his childhood background and fondness for animals when developing his own show — working with house pets like dogs and cats and even ducks and geese. All have been rescued from animal shelters, Popovich says, and are treated humanely. Unsurprisingly, he adds, dogs are eager to please and often the easiest to train. "All you have to do is channel a dog's energy to the right direction."

Popovich feels his show's success comes from creating situations that are natural for the animal but also relatable for the human audience: like a dog sitting behind a desk, barking to answer questions or doggy firefighters rescuing cats from a burning building. He also says the animals definitely sense they are performing. He trains in his living room, gradually introducing the pets to stage lights and audiences — making certain they feel comfortable. He even tells a story of bringing a couple retired cat performers along to shows just to hang out in the dressing room — simply because he felt certain they'd feel lonely and depressed leaving show biz entirely.

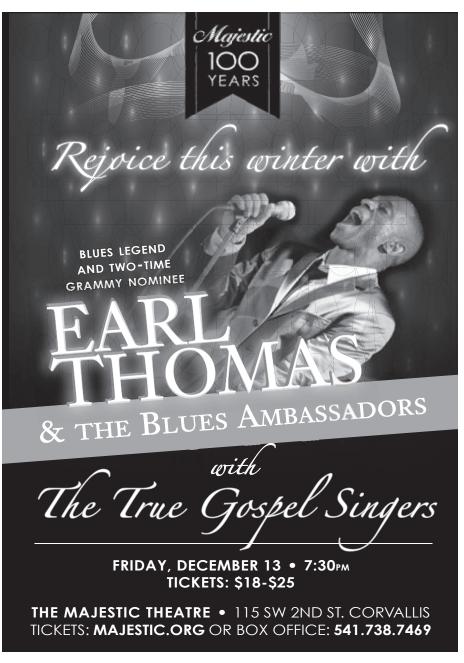
Audiences at The Popovich Comedy Pet Theater should expect more than just pet tricks. Popovich stresses his show is for all ages, not just children — expect a storyline, acrobats, jugglers and, most of all, fun.

The Popovich Comedy Pet Theater comes to Eugene for one night only 7 pm Friday, Dec. 13, in the Soreng Theater at the Hult; \$25-\$35, youth (ages









Jolly Jogging Jumpers!

Raid your closets for Oregon's Ugliest Sweater Run BY SILAS VALENTINO

n ugly holiday sweater is like eggnog and Macaulay Culkin — once a year they reappear and are enjoyed. "Tis the season, Marge! We only get 30 sweet noggy days. Then the government takes it away again," Homer Simpson once pined, and few can match Homer's lust for the holiday spirit(s). Except perhaps for one Derek Zinser, the man behind the inaugural Oregon's Ugliest Sweater Run 5K on Dec. 15.

Zinser has created multiple races in Eugene including the '80s-themed Rad Run 5K, Dirty Duck 5K and the Mascots for a Cure (part of Relay for Life), which brought together 161 unique mascots in one location, just six shy of the world record. "I'm a huge Christmas dork," Zinser says. "I love the '80s, I love my Ducks and now this one."

Oregon's Ugliest Sweater Run's mission is aimed at supplying two of the largest tinder for the holiday season's yule log: It's a

family event and a way to give back to the community. The race is sponsored by various local businesses, and proceeds go to FOOD For Lane County, Toys for Tots and the Foster & Adoptive Parent Association of Lane County. Runners can bring food and toys to donate, but Zinser is banking on the \$5 parking fee. "I'm hoping people can bring \$5 because you can do more with \$5 than the food," he says. "My favorite part about these events is that it creates wins for everybody."

The ugly holiday sweater has become an ironic gag these past few seasons (thank you, hipsters) but they can still warm the heart both literally and figuratively. "The sweater I have ... jeez," Zinser says. "It has ribbons, stockings and Christmas lights that light up."

The running event is geared toward creating the most fun, so if your idea of Track Town is a pizza lunch buffet, have no fear, you can still enjoy the race. The 3.1-mile run will be split up every quarter mile into twelve different sections aligning with one of the holiday's classic odes.

"We want to do something fun so what's better than the 'Twelve Days of Christmas'?" Zinser says. From 11 Eugenean firefighters bagpiping to three grilled hens, the race will offer $% \left(1\right) =\left(1\right) \left(1\right) \left$ something festive and exciting around each corner, so chin up, Scrooge. If walking is more your bag, you won't be alone. Even the race officials understand how tough running can be. "No, I actually don't like to run," Zinser says. "I hate running, but I like setting up running events."

So dust off that sweater you own that would most likely make a BuzzFeed list, grab a group of friends, bear the cold and head on down to the park for a day of festivities, community and holiday cheer. If you're parched after the race, put on your best Homer face and join the "Celebrity Eggnog Chugging Contest" at noon at the 5th Street Public Market. ■

Oregon's Ugliest Sweater Run starts rain or shine at 10 am Sunday, Dec. 15, at Alton Baker Park. For more information visit oregonsugliestsweaterrun.com



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calendar

2013 HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

FRIDAY, NOV. 22

Fern Ridge & Veneta Annual Holiday Bazaar, food and crafts by local artisans, 9am-5pm today and Nov. 23, 541-935-8443.

Maude Kerns presents "Art for All Seasons" exhibit, Nov. 22 - Dec. 20, Opening Reception Nov. 22, 6-8pm, FREE.

SATURDAY, NOV. 23

Holiday Market, hundreds of booths with handcrafted gifts, international food court and live music, 10am-6pm ongoing weekends until Dec. 24, Exhibit Hall, Lane County Fairgrounds,

"Let it Snow" presented by the Academy of Ballet Fantastique, 7pm, Wildish Theater, Springfield, \$16, \$9 kids.

SUNDAY, NOV. 24

Children's Chanukah Celebration, crafts. activities, live music, stories and baked goods, 10am-1pm, Temple Beth Israel, 1175 E. 29th Ave., \$5 per child suggested donation.

TUESDAY, NOV. 26

New Zone Gallery Holiday Store featuring handcrafted gifts made for the holidays under \$50, noon-6pm Tuesdays through Saturdays, Nov. 26 to Dec. 28, 164 W. Broadway, 541-683-0759.

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 27

Festival of Trees, trees, wreaths, Christmas stockings, gift baskets, holiday fair in Dicken's Village, entertainment, visits from Santa, Candy Cane Forest and chainsaw art carving, 9am-6pm today, 10am-7pm Nov. 28, 9am-9pm Nov. 29, 9am-2pm Nov. 30, 9am-6pm Dec. 1, Valley River Inn. 541-228-3040.

THURSDAY, NOV. 28

Annual Community Thanksgiving Day Dinner hosted by Friendly Street Church of God, transportation available and volunteers welcome, noon-3pm, 2290 Friendly St., 541-345-

Turkey Trot, 4-mile run, 2-mile walk, 200-meter kid's Gobbler Gallop, benefit run for FOOD for Lane County 9am, Valley River Center, register through FOOD for Lane County or Eugene Running Company, 116 Oakway Center, \$20 adults, \$15 17 and younger.

FRIDAY, DEC. 6

6th Annual Holiday Sale at Clay Space featuring more than 20 local artists, 3-9pm today, 10am-6pm Dec. 7, noon-5pm Dec. 8, Clay Space, 222 Polk St.

Upstart Crow Studios presents Pinocchio, 7pm Dec. 6 and 7, 3pm matinees Dec. 7 and 8, 855 W. 1st Ave., \$10.

Naughty Listed: Stories of Holiday Misbehavior presented by Planned Parenthood, 6pm, Cozmic, "Holly Jolly Follies" celebration presented by Florence Events Center, 7pm today, 7pm Dec. 7 and 2pm Dec. 8, Florence Events Center, visit www.eventcenter.org for more info, \$15, \$8 ages

Tree Lighting Festival with caroling, refreshments, hayride and gift giveaways, 5pm, downtown Oakridge, FREE.

2nd and Blair Artist's Holiday Sale and Open House, 5pm Dec. 6, 11am Dec. 7 and 12pm Dec. 8. 2nd and Blair St. FRFF

Cottage Theatre presents James W. Rogers' adaptation of It's a Wonderful Life, 8pm, Dec. 6, 7, 13, 14, 19, 20 and 21, 2:30pm matinees Dec. 8, 15 and 22, 700 Village Dr., \$18 adult, \$15 youth.

33rd Annual Holiday Ceramics Studio Sale at Faye Nakamura Studio, 1-6pm today, 10am-4pm Dec. 7, 2695 University St., FREE.

Holiday Choral Concert presents four UO choirs performing holiday-themed music, 8pm, Beall Concert Hall, \$7, \$5 students, seniors.

R. Atencio's Studio Sale, today 3pm-7pm, and Dec. 7 10am-4pm, 98 W. 26th St.

It's a Wonderful Life presented by Radio Redux 7:30pm today and Dec. 7, 2pm Dec. 8, at the Wildish Theater, Springfield, 541-206-3283, \$40-\$60.

SATURDAY, DEC. 7

6th Annual "Breakfast with Santa and Mrs. Claus" hosted by Eugene Downtown Lions Club, breakfast includes pancakes, sausage, eggs, cocoa and coffee, photographer available, Santa's helpers assist kids with frosting cookies, bike raffle, 8am-11am, St. Thomas Episcopal Fellowship Hall, 1465 Coburg Rd., 541-344-1049, \$8. \$5 kids.

Annual Greens Sale hosted by Eugene Garden Club. Natural wreaths, table floral designs, little trees, cone baskets, poinsettias and other holiday home decorations, 9am-3pm. Eugene Garden Club, 1645 High St., 541-485-5772 for more information or special orders.

Sugar Plum Festival with craft show, food and drinks, 9am-5pm today, 11am-3pm Dec. 8, 48119 E. 1 St., Oakridge, FREE.

Wednesdays at St. Jude's Art Group Open Studio Sale, today 10am-6pm, Dec. 8, 12-5pm, 2275 Columbia St. 541-683-3424.

The Eugene Symphony Guild presents "Christmas in the Kitchen, a Tour of Homes," self-guided tour to home kitchens hosting local chefs, gift basket drawings, holiday décor, live music, 10am-4pm, for more information call 541-255-7323, visit eugenesymphonyguild.org, \$15 adv, \$18.

Jingle Bells Run, 12k run (new), 8k run and 5k run/walk, music, Santa, breakfast, noon, Maurie Jacobs Park, 541-484-9883, eclecticedgeracing. com. \$15-20

Holiday Home Tour presented by the Newport Symphony Orchestra, four houses decorated for the holidays, live music, 11am-4pm today, noon-4pm Dec. 8, Newport, 541-574-0614, \$18 adv.,

Eugene Waldorf School's Winter Light Faire, puppet shows, cakewalks, candle dipping. The



JOY TO THE WORLD, AT THE HULT DEC. 14

Nutcracker ballet, Hanukkah room, crosscut saw competition, games, food and live music, 11am-4pm, 1350 McLean Blvd, FREE, some activities require ticket; \$1.50 each.

The 61st Annual Springfield Christmas Parade, 1pm, begins at Olympic St., FREE.

"Christmas in Cottage Grove" with tree lighting at Trailhead Park, scavenger hunt in Historic Downtown District, pictures with Santa, winter wonderland, 6pm-9pm, Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce, FREE.

Handel's Messigh presented by Eugene Concert Choir, 8pm, Hult Center, \$24-38. College, youth and senior discounts available.

SUNDAY, DEC. 8

12th Annual HOUR Traders Winter Celebration, activities. live music, entertainment, 11am-5pm, Old World Deli Arena, 341 SW 2nd St., Corvallis, FREE.

UO Gospel Choir and Ensemble's 30th Anniversary Concert, celebrating thirty years of uplifting, high-energy music, 5pm, Beall Concert Hall, \$8, \$5 students, seniors.

The 11th Annual "Experience Christmas with NCU" community concert presented by Northwest Christian University, 7pm today and Dec. 9, Silva Concert Hall, FREE.

MONDAY, DEC. 9

Oregon Brass Quintet feat. UO Student Ensembles, holiday concert in support of homes for Lane County's homeless, 7:30pm, Central Presbuterian Church, 555 E 15th Ave., \$10 suggested donation.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 11

Tingstad & Rumbel performance, 8pm today, 8pm Dec. 12, Tsunami Books, 2585 Willamette St., 541-345-8986.

THURSDAY, DEC. 12

Very Victorian Holiday Party and Silent Auction, 5:30-8pm, Shelton McMurphey Johnson House, 541-484-0808, www.smjhouse.org, \$10.

"Button Up Your Overcoat," The Shedd's 6th annual Christmas show, 7:30pm today, Dec. 17 & 18, 1:30pm Dec. 15, The Shedd, \$15-\$30.

FRIDAY, DEC. 13

Holiday Pottery Sale at Standhardt Studio, 5-8pm today, 10am-4pm Dec. 14, 11am-4pm Dec. 15, 55 W. 27th Ave., 541-514-4646.

Faith Rahill's Holiday Pottery Sale, 5-8pm today, 10am-4pm Dec. 14, 11am-4pm Dec. 15, 2581



Monroe Street, Eugene, 541-344-2100.

Winter Wonderland. pictures with Santa, prizes, 5:30-8:30pm, Willamalane Center, Springfield, 541-736-4544, \$6-\$7.50.

12th Annual Winter Solstice Celebration "The Gift of Storytelling," live music, performances, storutelling and crafts, 5-8pm, UO Museum of Natural and Cultural History, 1680 E. 15th Ave, admission free with donation of money or non-perishable food item for FOOD for Lane County.

Earl Thomas & The Blues Ambassadors with The True Gospel Singers, 7:30pm, The Majestic Theatre, 155 SW 2nd St., Corvallis, \$18-\$25.

SATURDAY, DEC. 14

Nearby Nature Lessons in the Learnscape Workshop: Draw Your Own Nature-Theme Holidau Cards with David Wagner, bring microtip pens and a favorite nature photo, other materials provided, pre-registration encouraged, 1-4pm, 541-687-9699 or info@nearbynature.org, Nearby Nature's Learnscape Yurt in Alton Baker Part, \$17-\$30 members, \$20-\$35 non-members.

Frozen Trail Runfest, 5K, 6,8, and 14 mile, 50K, 9am 50K, 10am all other events, Mount Pisgah, register at Eugene Running Company, 541-484-9883, 116 Oakway Center, \$20-\$55.

Breakfast with Santa, pancakes, crafts, photos, 9am-noon, Willamalane Adult Activity Center, Springfield, 541-912-8773.

McCornack Elementary Holiday Bazaar, gifts for the holidays, 9am-3pm, 1968 Brittany St., for information and application contact Kim at hove k@4j.lane.edu.

Tracie Manso's 18th Annual Potteru Studio Sale and Open House, 10am-6pm today and Dec. 15, 2966 Calla St., 342-8213, FREE.

Suzuki Strings Holiday Concert at the Holiday Market, Students of the UO's Suzuki Strings Program, ages four to 10, celebrate the holiday season by performing on violin, viola and cello, 11am, Lane County Fairgrounds, FREE.

Past and Presents Holiday Open House, natureinspired gifts by local artists, cider and cookies, 11am-5pm today and Dec. 16, Museum of Natural and Cultural History, 384 W. 13th Ave, 541-342-4410. FREE.

11th Annual Adventures in Narnia Holiday Ballet and Toys for Tots Benefit presented by Hosanna Performing Arts Foundation, 1pm and 7pm today, 4pm Dec. 15, Ragozzino Performance Hall, Lane Community College, 541-607-5798, \$13.

Holiday Tea at the Shelton McMurphey Johnson House, 1pm-3pm today and Dec. 15 by reservation. www smjhouse.org or 541-484-0808 for reservations, \$30.

Nearby Nature Lessons in the Learnscape Workshop: Draw Your Own Nature-Theme Holiday Cards with David Wagner, bring microtip pens and a favorite nature photo, other materials provided, pre-registration encouraged, 1-4pm, 541-687-9699 or info@nearbynature.org, Nearby Nature's Learnscape Yurt in Alton Baker Part, \$17-\$30 members, \$20-\$35 non-members.

Cascadia Wildlands' 11th Annual Wonderland Auction, live and silent auctions, live jazz, buffet dinner, Ninkasi beer and local wine, 6pm-10pm,

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Lane Jazz Ensemble 12/06 7:30pm

Lane Jazz Combos 12/10 5:00pm

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U0 EMU Ballroom, \$40 adv., \$50 door.

The Nutcracker Remixed presented by All That! Dance, 7pm today and 2pm Dec. 15, Soreng Theater, \$18.

Pink Martini presented by Eugene Symphony, 7:30pm, Hult Center, \$40-\$75.

SUNDAY, DEC. 15

Oregon's Ugliest Sweater Run, 10am at Alton Baker Park, for more info visit oregonsugliestsweaterrun.com.

"Holiday Pops!" presented by Eugene Concert Choir, 4pm, Hult Center, \$24-38. College, youth and senior discounts available.

TUESDAY, DEC. 17

Shelton McMurphey Johnson House presents Candlelight Tours, 6-9pm today, Dec. 19 and Dec. 22, 541-484-0808, www.smjhouse.org, \$6 adults, \$3 for children 12 and younger.

THURSDAY, DEC. 19

Candlelight Baroque Concert featuring the Oregon Mozart Players, 7:30 pm today and Dec.

20, First Christian Church, 1166 0ak St., 541-346-4363 \$15-\$45, \$10 students and youth.

FRIDAY, DEC. 20

The Nutcracker presented by Eugene Ballet Company, 7:30pm today, 2pm and 7:30pm Dec. 21, 2pm Dec. 22 Hult Center, \$28-\$53, college and youth discounts available.

"A Camerosity Christmas" presented by Camerosity Improv Theater, 8 pm today and Dec. 21, Blue Door Theater, Lane Community College.

SUNDAY, DEC. 22

Eugene Sacred Harp Singers' Annual Concert and Sing-Along, 7pm, Eugene Garden Club, 1645 High St., 541-345-3626, FREE, donations welcome.

TUESDAY, DEC. 31

La Traviata presented by Eugene Opera, 7:30pm today and Jan. 3, 2:30pm Jan. 5, Hult Center, \$31-\$79, college and youth discounts available.

Zepparella New Year's Eve with Blue Lotus, 9pm, McDonald Theatre, \$18 adv, \$22 door.





